

MOOD DISORDERS

A mood disorder, sometimes call an affect disorder is an emotional disturbance such as severe depression (major depressive disorder) or depression alternating with mania (bipolar disorder).

Major Depressive Disorder

As alluded to above, because of the often turbulent nature and natural mood swings of adolescents, this can be somewhat difficult to diagnose. According to the DSM-IV, five or more of the following symptoms must be present almost every day for two weeks for a major depressive disorder (MDD):

- **Overwhelming sadness or irritability.** The person has a depressed or irritable mood. The person feels sad or empty and can appear tearful.
- **Diminished interest.** The person has a markedly diminished interest or pleasure in doing all or most activities.
- **Weight loss or gain.** There is a significant weight loss when not dieting or a weight gain represented by a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month. As well, there may be a decrease or increase in appetite almost every day.
- **Disrupted sleep patterns.** The person is unable to sleep at night or sleeps too much.
- **Physical agitation or retardation.** The person's physical movements and behaviors appear abnormally agitation or slowed.
- **Fatigue or loss of energy.** The person feels or displays a lack of energy or fatigue.
- **Guilt, worthlessness, and hopelessness.** The person feels inappropriate guilt, hopelessness, or worthlessness.
- **Indecisiveness or diminished cognitive capacity.** The person has a diminished ability to think or concentrate or is indecisive.
- **Thoughts of death or suicide ideas.** The person has reoccurring thoughts of death or dying, reoccurring suicidal ideation (thinking about suicide without a specific plan or intention), has a plan for committing suicide, or has made a suicide attempt.
- **Change and impairment.** This mood is a change from the personal's normal mood and causes a significant impairment in social, academic, occupational, or other areas of functioning.

The first onset of MDD is often in adolescence (Evans, et al., 2005). About 21% of females and 13% of males have experienced a major depression at some time in their lives. It is estimated that about 20% of adults have experienced a mood disorder at some time in their lives (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2008).

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder (previously called manic-depressive disorder) is characterized by severe depression alternating with a distinct period in which the person has a manic episode. Here the person acts and feels abnormally elevated or expansive mood or irritable mood. The DSM-IV-TR describes the criteria for a manic episode in Figure 7.3:

Figure 7.3. Characteristics of a manic episode.

- A. A distinct period of abnormally and persistently elevated, expansive, or irritable mood, lasting at least 1 week (or any duration if hospitalization is necessary).
- B. During the period of mood disturbance, three (or more) of the following symptoms have persisted (four if the mood is only irritable) and have been present to a significant degree:
 1. inflated self-esteem or grandiosity
 2. decreased need for sleep (e.g., feels rested after only 3 hours of sleep)
 3. more talkative than usual or pressure to keep talking
 4. flight of ideas or subjective experience that thoughts are racing
 5. distractibility (i.e., attention too easily drawn to unimportant or irrelevant external stimuli)
 6. increase in goal-directed activity (either socially, at work or school, or sexually) or psychomotor agitation
 7. excessive involvement in pleasurable activities that have a high potential for painful consequences (e.g., engaging in unrestrained buying sprees, sexual indiscretions, or foolish

business investments)” (DSM-IV, p. 332).

MACMH (2010) lists the following symptoms or behaviors related to bipolar disorder for children and adolescents in Figure 7.4:

Figure 7.4. Symptoms related to bipolar disorder in children and adolescents.

- An expansive or irritable mood
- Depression
- Rapidly changing moods lasting a few hours to a few days
- Explosive, lengthy, and often destructive rages
- Separation anxiety
- Defiance of authority
- Hyperactivity, agitation, and distractibility
- Strong and frequent cravings, often for carbohydrates and sweets
- Excessive involvement in multiple projects and activities
- Impaired judgment, impulsivity, racing thoughts, and pressure to keep talking
- Dare-devil behaviors
- Inappropriate or precocious sexual behavior
- Delusions and hallucination
- Grandiose belief in own ability that defy the laws of logic (becoming a rock star overnight, for example)

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